

Fact Sheet

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S FY 1999 BUDGET: PROVIDING WISE STEWARDSHIP OF THE LAND

President Clinton's FY 1999 budget continue the Administration's path of wise stewardship over our nation's precious lands and natural resources. USDA is the largest conservation organization in the world, managing more than 191 million acres of national forests and grasslands, providing technical and financial assistance to private landowners from coast to coast, and conducting more research on natural resources than any other agency. The \$4.6 billion combined budget for the Forest Service (FS) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) funds public land management, research, fire suppression, land acquisition, private land conservation, watershed improvements, pollution prevention, urban conservation assistance, and wetlands protection.

- **Environmental Fund for America:** The budget recommends \$83 million -- \$60 million in FS and \$23 million in NRCS -- to boost clean water efforts. This funding will further USDA's impressive progress under the Clean Water Act by addressing streambank protection on private lands, toxic chemicals from abandoned mines, run-off pollution, watershed monitoring, healthy forests, and rangeland improvement.
- **Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP):** 164,000 additional acres of wetlands will be protected through WRP. By the end of the year 2000, 975,000 acres of land will be preserved through WRP.
- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP):** This program, created by the 1996 Farm Bill, provides flexible technical and financial assistance to landowners seeking to address natural resource challenges that impact soil, water, and related resources, including grazing lands, wetlands, and wildlife. The FY 1999 budget will increase EQIP funding by \$100 million to a total of \$300 million.
- **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP):** The FY 1999 budget estimates funding of \$20 million for WHIP, which aides landowners in the protection of threatened and endangered wildlife. USDA expects to enroll 130,000 acres in FY 1999.

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-2-

- **Recreation Increases:** The Forest Service budget includes \$225 million for recreation and wilderness management, an increase of \$21 million, to meet the rising public demand for recreational use of our national forests.

Other highlights of the President's FY 1999 budget include:

- \$337 million for the Forest Service to fight forest fires and restore fire depleted eco-systems.
- \$163 million for private forest owners to improve stewardship of their lands, support urban forest conservation, and fight forest pests. The Administration is seeking \$579 million for NRCS to help carry out its long-standing commitment to work cooperatively with conservation districts to conserve and protect soil, water and wildlife habitats.
- \$25 million for the Conservation Farm Option, which will provide ten-year contracts to protect our nation's farmland.
- Funding of \$10 million for USDA's contribution to an interagency Climate Change Technology Initiative. Through cleaner burning fuels and the use of plants to remove carbon from our air, agriculture and forestry can be a significant part of the global warming solution.

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